

Andrew Jackson to James Tallmadge, Jr., March 12, 1824, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO JAMES TALLMADGE.¹

¹ Draft. Handwriting of John H. Eaton.

Washington, March 12, 1824.

D'r Sir, Your friendly Letter of the 6th of March was yesterday recvd, and as candor is the language by me always admired, I thank you for the freedom with which you have spoken your sentiments. The subject on which you have written is indeed one of intrest, to the american people; the feelings they evince, and the excitement manifested thro the nation is confirmatory of the fact. I am well pleased to see it, inasmuch as there is evedence in it, that they are awake to the rights that belong to them, nor disposed with passive submission to yield them.

On the subject brought to my consideration by your Letter, I have all along forborne to speak, for the reason of its delicacy; and because any thing to be said by me, might be imputed to selfish consideration; if however I know any thing of myself, no such feeling has, or shall control me. To you however I will speak, as you have done, freely—without reserve. The principles which have governed me thro life, will I hope not forsake me, in the present situation in which I am placed. I remember not, ever to have solicited an office: my Country it is true has been kind to me, and perhaps beyond any merits of mine; but it has been thro her own volantary notion, and not from any solicitation of mine; and when my name was presented to the nation, for the important and highly responsible office of Chief magistrate, none certainly less expected it, and none desired it less than I did. I

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was aware, that, even if elected, the trouble of fatigue which would necessarily devolve, would add nothing to my quiet or happiness; while judging from the past, I foresaw that every little error and indiscretion of life would be treasured, and magnified into crimes of the deepest die. A portion of my Country however from no solicitation on my part have thought proper to consider me worthy of this high post; and acting on the principles which have always governed me, I am content for her to decide without any sort of interference on my part. Should she call me to act I shall, as I always have done, act with that decision and judgment of which I am capable, without any regard to the benefit or injury to be produced to myself; and should the choice fall on any other, believe me, my dear Sir, that not one moments displeasure will be felt by me. I shall then be a private citisen, and in that character, shall understand my duty better than were I to be placed in an high and elevated situation.

On the subject of your Letter therefore, I can give no opinion other than what is already offered, that my mind will rest contented at any decision which my Country may freely, and of her own accord pronounce. Could I assure success to myself, by any sort of combination, management or intrigue, I declare to you most truly, it would not be resorted to. Let my friends therefore every where, adopt that course which, by my belive, will best conduce to the interest of the Country; and whatever it may be, I assure them I shall rest contented

With my best wishes for your health and happiness I am with great respect

Yr Mo Obt